

OJJDP Multimedia Presentation

“There is no greater measure of our nation’s compassion or our humanity as a people than how we protect, raise, and care for our children”

—Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales

We are the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Come and take a look at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Authorized through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, the bureau is a component of the Office of Justice Programs within the U.S. Department of Justice. Through grants to state and local governments and youth-serving organizations, OJJDP supports programs and policies that serve children, families, and their communities. We provide training and technical assistance, support research and evaluation, and disseminate information to help states and communities identify what works and find solutions to the challenges that confront our nation’s children. We focus this work on delinquency prevention, child protection, public safety, and strengthening the juvenile justice system.

We Prevent Delinquency

OJJDP has been committed to youth for more than 30 years, and our efforts include initiatives to address the special needs of minorities, tribal youth, girls, and disadvantaged youth. We work with schools, communities, and grass root organizations to prevent delinquency, and to intervene quickly when juveniles commit delinquent acts. Our goal is to keep juveniles from more serious, and more violent, behavior. Through our support of delinquency prevention programs, such as truancy reduction and mentoring, we enable communities to provide youth with the opportunity for a better future.

“If people want to do something for the community, I think this is a very important program—the mentor program. I’ve been involved in it, and I’ll continue hopefully to be involved in it. And I think, if we could get kind of a one-on-one relationship with a lot of children who need this kind

of thing. I think it would be very important for the growth of the children and for the satisfaction of the adults.”

We Protect Children

One of our most important goals is to keep children safe. Our programs respond to the problems of abused and neglected children, support children who are exposed to violence, and coordinate with state and local law enforcement to create task forces to respond to the growing problem of Internet crimes against children. We support the AMBER Alert Program and, under the direction of the Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs, who serves as the National Coordinator for AMBER Alert, we work in partnership with law enforcement and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to find and bring missing children home.

“They were the major advocates behind the AMBER Alert. Their work brought me home. Their work everyday saved my life. And so without them, I may not be here. The other young woman that was kidnapped with me may not be here. Hundreds of children across the nation may not be with their families today.”

We Enhance Public Safety

We know that it is important to protect the public by helping law enforcement and communities hold juveniles accountable for their actions, and helping to rehabilitate youth offenders for their return to the communities. Along this line, we support programs and initiatives to reduce youth involvement in gangs. Through our support of demonstration programs to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children, we provide services to children who are victims and also work with law enforcement and courts to prosecute adults who would victimize our most vulnerable citizens, our children.

“In years past, many of these individuals were charged with misdemeanors and of course they’re right back out on the street in a short period of time. And so we think this is going to give us a

just another tool to prosecute and get these individuals off the street that prey on our young kids.”

We Strengthen the Juvenile Justice System

We work closely with states and local jurisdictions to help them implement enhanced programming, meet the requirements of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, and improve and strengthen their juvenile justice systems. Our efforts have yielded impressive results, with almost 100-percent state compliance with the Act’s four core requirements and decreases of well over 95 percent in the number of violations nationwide. Keeping youth from entering the system is our first priority, but there are times when youth must be committed to juvenile facilities, and we work with states to ensure that conditions in youth facilities meet standards of care. Our award-winning Performance-Based Standards Program is one mechanism we use to improve the conditions and services in juvenile facilities.

“If the boy or the girl committed a terrible crime, the court will decide how long they are going to be removed from society for. That is the amount of time we have to make the changes, and we have to work as hard as we possibly can with that child believing that we can make life better.”... “In my over 30 years in juvenile corrections, the Performance-Based Standards project is really the most exciting event I’ve ever been involved in, because I really feel that it is able to make a staff feel better about the work they do on a day-to-day basis.”

We Remain Committed to Serving Children, Families, and Communities

Recent trends are positive—juvenile arrests are declining, family violence is decreasing, and juvenile victimization is also on the decline—but we have more work to do. As the agency charged with developing national policy on juvenile justice issues, we continue to work as partners with other Federal, state, and local agencies; private sector organizations; and families to nurture and keep children safe and to enhance the juvenile justice system, while ensuring public safety.